

## ***Step 5 - OCI Construction Permit Inspections***

Purpose of This Step – The issuance of any building permit gives the permit holder the right to proceed with the construction project. Construction is limited to the scope of the project delineated on an approved set of project plans, a building or trade permit, a permit job card or any combination of the three. At various stages of construction or remodeling, inspection is required. What is required to be inspected, when an item must be inspected and the timeliness of an inspection are all dependent upon the nature of the building permit project. Generally, all required inspections for building, electrical, elevator, mechanical, plumbing, sewer or fire suppression/alarm system installation or work are scheduled by the licensed contractors who have been contracted to do the construction, and/or have been issued the pertinent building and/or trade construction permits.

The following are examples of activities that require inspection by OCI:

- Building or structure (walls, roof, etc.)
- Engineered fill
- Foundation systems and components
- Concrete construction
- Erection and placement of steel and steel framing
- Erection of masonry
- Erection of pre-cast concrete or other pre-cast materials
- Certain fire-resistive materials
- Fire resistive rated walls, ceilings, beams, columns and floors
- All electrical, plumbing, mechanical or sewer systems/components (BEFORE concealment)
- Fire alarm/smoke detection systems
- Fire protection systems (sprinklers)
- Grease hoods and duct systems
- Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) compliance

- Installation of required screening, landscaping and landscape buffering
- Swimming pools, including pool structures, fencing, electrical and plumbing systems
- Spas/whirlpools
- Remodeling, including structural building and any trade work
- Roofing and siding, new or replacement
- Final grading
- Final inspection for building occupancy

### ***Scheduling Inspections and Obtaining Results of Inspections***

Generally, the licensed contractors that are included on or attached to the permit make OCI construction permit inspection requests. Licensed contractors are assigned special access codes that allow them to call an automated phone inspection-scheduling system to schedule inspections 24- hours/day, 7 days/week, or to schedule inspections via the Internet through OCI's "E-Permits" system by a secured contractor access. Inspections can be scheduled for the same day up to 6:30 a.m. when using these automated systems. All licensed contractors are strongly encouraged to utilize these automated inspection-scheduling systems.

The automated scheduling systems allow contractors to request a specific day for an inspection, and a choice of "a.m.", "p.m." or "no time preference". For certain types of inspections, such as concrete pours or bond-beam inspections, the contractor can request a specific one-hour window for the inspection.

These same automated inspection scheduling systems allow OCI inspectors to post the results of inspections to the automated OCI permit and inspection tracking system from the field, and also allow licensed contractors to obtain the results of inspections, including voice mail messages or notes from the inspector, about the results of an inspection or inspections.

Contractors can also cancel previously scheduled inspections using these automated systems. Contractors can also call OCI during office hours at 268-4461 to cancel a requested inspection.

Inspections can also be requested by calling the OCI dispatch line at 268-4461 or 268-4468, and most homeowner-occupants who have obtained their own permits can schedule, cancel or obtain results of required inspections by calling this number between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on regular work days (Monday through Friday).

When an inspector arrives at a job site, the following expectations apply:

- The site is clearly identified by an address
- The permit and/or permit job card is posted in plain view
- The site is readily accessible
- Approved plans are clearly accessible at the job site
- The work for which the inspection is requested is ready to be inspected

*Helpful Hints:*

- *Make sure that structures are unlocked for requested inspections and readily accessible. Don't expect an inspector to be able to locate a key and let himself/herself inside a building.*
- *Make sure that the approved set of plans, stamped by the Office of Central Inspection, is easily located and accessible to the inspector.*
- *Make sure that the permit job card issued with the permit is easily located and accessible to the inspector. If there is no good place on the site to post the job card at the time of requested inspection, call the inspector to let them know where the job card will be.*

Failure to provide for the above items could result in the inspection not being made, and in some cases could result in a \$30 reinspection fee being charged to the contractor that requested the inspection.

Inspectors will note inspections on the permit job card that is posted at the construction site. If problems are found during an inspection, the OCI inspector will leave a notice on the site that outlines the deficiencies. Construction inspectors can generally be reached in the office in person or by phone in the mornings between the hours of 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. and in the afternoon after 3:30 p.m. Inspectors can be reached by calling the general OCI dispatch number, 268-4461, or by calling directly to the specific construction inspection sections listed below:

Structural/Building	- 268-4461
Electrical/Elevator	- 268-4465
Plumbing/Sewers	- 268-4471
Mechanical (HVAC)	- 268-4473
Fire Suppression/Alarm Systems	- 268-4441 (Fire Department, Fire Prevention)

***Saturday, Holiday and After-Hours Inspections:***

If it is necessary for inspections to be performed outside of normal work hours or inspection time frames, you must call the OCI dispatcher at 268-4461 by at least 3:00 p.m. for an after-hours inspection on that same workday, or by no later than 3:00 p.m. on the work day prior to a requested weekend or holiday inspection. Before such inspection can be confirmed, an after hours/weekend/holiday inspection fee that covers the cost of the overtime inspection service must be paid to OCI.

***Inspection of Fire Related Issues:***

OCI works closely with the Wichita Fire Department to ensure compliance with local fire protection requirements. OCI coordinates inspection activity for construction permits with fire department personnel (primarily for fire alarm systems, smoke detection systems, and fire suppression/sprinklering systems). Primary inspections conducted by the Fire Department for building permits include fire suppression, smoke detection and fire alarm system installation inspections when these systems are required as part of the building project.

***Special Inspections:***

The Building Code requires that for some types of construction, privately contracted “special inspectors”, with very specific expertise in a given field, inspect certain construction processes, usually on a periodic basis, but sometimes on a “continuous” basis. Certain types of steel fabrication/erection, masonry construction, concrete erection or engineered fill are some examples of processes that may require special inspection. During the project planning and plan review processes, an agreement outlining any required special inspection requirements, and who the special inspectors will be, must be completed and submitted to OCI prior to building permit issuance.

### ***Inspection of Boilers:***

The inspection and certification of boilers is handled directly through the State of Kansas (see Appendix A for contact information).

### ***Final Inspections and Certificates of Occupancy:***

When the building or structure is complete, it is necessary to call for a “Final” building inspection.

For new one and two-family homes, a “combination” final inspection is generally conducted as part of the building inspector’s final inspection, and includes the final inspection on the building structure/code, as well as plumbing and mechanical installation/code final inspections. Prior to calling for the final building inspection on one and two-family construction, a separate final electrical inspection should be scheduled and approved. Once a final building inspection is approved, a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for the one and two-family building, structure or space may be granted. For one and two-family home additions, such “combination” building inspections are provided throughout the project for all construction phases, and include building, plumbing, mechanical and electrical inspections by a single, certified combination building inspector.

For commercial construction, all appropriate “final” trade inspections (electrical/elevator, mechanical, plumbing, sewer and fire suppression/detection/alarm systems) must be scheduled and

approved PRIOR to completion of the final building inspection, and prior to issuance of any CO for the building, structure or space. In many instances, especially for new construction, a number of tests need to be completed as part of the final building inspection.

Final COs are issued as part of the final satisfactory inspection of all permit requirements, and are included as part of the building permit job card.

***Obtaining a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy:***

A Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) allows the building, structure or space to be used or occupied on a temporary basis, prior to all project requirements being completed. Before a TCO can be issued, the OCI building inspector, fire inspector and OCI trade inspectors must determine that no substantial hazard will result from occupancy of the building or portion thereof. Generally, all life safety issues must be properly installed/completed to allow any public occupancy (exit systems, exit lights and emergency lighting, required fire detection, suppression and alarm systems, guardrails and handrails, fire-resistive walls and assemblies, HVAC and required smoke/fire dampers, site access and required public water, fire hydrant or sewer facilities, etc.).

A “CITY OF WICHITA TEMPORARY CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY” request/guide form should be submitted by the General Contractor (see copy of form in Appendix B). Forms can be obtained from OCI by calling 268-4461, or can be obtained from the OCI building inspector.

***Helpful Hints:***

*It is very important to communicate your intent to request a TCO or Partial CO to your building inspector as soon as you are aware of the need, so that any preliminary walk-throughs can be arranged, temporary exiting procedures can be discussed, and possible obstacles can be identified. It is also good to clearly communicate as far in advance as possible the nature and extent of the TCO or Partial CO building usage*

*(furniture placement and stocking only; some employee occupancy in restricted areas; etc.). If known in advance, the building inspector and/or building supervisor can also coordinate TCO requests with trade inspectors, Fire Department inspectors, and others as necessary.*

*TCOs are granted for a limited time. The intent is to allow use of the building while the project is being completed. OCI expects the general contractor to be moving towards completion of the project and to call for another final inspection of the project when completed. If for some reason the project cannot be completed by the stated TCO expiration date, the contractor needs to apply for or request a renewal or extension of the TCO. This request is made through the OCI building inspector or supervisor.*

***Partial Certificate of Occupancy:***

A Partial Certificate of Occupancy (PCO) may be granted for a portion of a building that has been completed to the extent that a CO or TCO can be issued for that portion of the project construction. This can be requested and arranged with the OCI building inspector for the project.

***Letter of Credit Requirements:***

On some projects, the contractor and/or owner may need a Final CO before all permit requirements are met, or may need a TCO for an extended period of time. This generally occurs when weather does not permit installation of required landscaping, screening and/or landscape buffers, or final required paving and parking lot striping (e.g., the TCO is requested on December 20<sup>th</sup>, and weather does not permit final paving/striping or landscape installation until March or April). In this situation, the contractor and/or project owner may submit to the Office of Central

Inspection a financial institution “Letter of Credit” or financial guarantee, payable to the City and in a form approved by the City, in an amount equal to roughly 125% of the projected cost of completing the uncompleted items. A sample Letter of Credit is included in Appendix B. Question about Letter of Credit submissions may be directed to OCI at 268-4468.